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COUNTRY USSR

SUBJECT Alteration in Soviet Grand Strategy

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1. Marshal L.A. Govorov has at present no specific command, but is directing the office for strategic coordination on the Soviet General Staff. In this capacity Govorov presides over the Committee for Strategic Coordination of the Defense Ministry.
2. This committee has been studying all questions concerned with the unification of general strategy, dividing the area covered into three zones: Europe, Europe-South Asia, and Far East. Govorov is in favor of priority for the defense of the second zone, Europe-South Asia, and conceives that defense as based on a Soviet offensive in the direction of the Dardanelles, Suez and the Persian Gulf. The plan is to prevent an air or ground attack on the war industrial centers of the Urals from the very beginning of a conflict.
3. For this reason Govorov opposes the strategic plan of Marshal Konev, which gives priority to strategic attack in Europe. Govorov believes that the cordon sanitaire of small states along the Soviet frontiers which allowed the capitalist nations to threaten the USSR has been reversed by the war and is today enough of a threat to the capitalist nations to prevent all danger to the USSR from that side. He also thinks that an offensive in Europe is not possible without the collaboration of Germany, and without that collaboration, it would render the USSR's task very exhausting everywhere, and would not permit the defense of the Europe-South Asia zone, where the USSR is vulnerable.
4. Govorov has thought out only the main lines of this strategy, since his education is not that of a technical specialist. But one has confidence that he would be an effective executive of such a strategy, possessing as he does the qualities of energetic leadership.
5. Govorov, who belongs to the Zhukov group and up to now has not occupied too brilliant a political position in the Party, is drawing nearer Malenkov. Soon after Stalin's death Malenkov reinforced Govorov's position. The latter now receives equal honors with Zhukov, Vasilevski, Sokolovski and Budenny, and is well ahead of Konev, Timoshenko or Malinovski. In his private life Govorov is considered as a steady, calm man, but he is also a heavy drinker and brutal. Because of his sincerity, several liaisons have been pardoned him--a rare thing in the USSR --particularly one with the dancer, Skiritova.

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